

WATCHES AND JEWELRY

IWC takes on smartwatches in humorous series

December 2, 2019



IWC's shorts star Kurt Klaus. Image courtesy of IWC

By STAFF REPORTS

Swiss watchmaker IWC Schaffhausen is spotlighting the simplicity and endurance of its mechanical Portugieser Perpetual Calendar through a campaign that contrasts the timepiece with smartwatches.

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"A Smart Watch. And a Half" follows IWC watchmaker Kurt Klaus as he talks with a fictional salesperson at a smartwatch store. Intended to be a playful jab at smartwatches, the series serves to showcase key features of IWC's timepieces by making a comparison.

Timeless tech

Mr. Klaus started at IWC in 1957, and he created the Portugieser Perpetual Calendar in the 1980s. The timepiece has 80 parts, and it is operated and adjusted using a single crown.

This simplicity is highlighted in a video in which Mr. Klaus asks how to change the time zone on a smartwatch. The sales associate says it is "easy" and then runs through a series of swipes and taps to get to the setting on the watch.

IWC's A Smart Watch. And a Half series

Pointing to the IWC watch's seven-day power reserve, a short finds Mr. Klaus asking the sales associate about the battery powered device. The salesperson cheerfully explains that he will need to plug the device in each night to charge it.

When the watchmaker asks about traveling, the associate gathers everything he will need to charge away from home, including cables and a dock.

Another short tackles the timelessness of the Portugieser Perpetual Calendar's technology. Mr. Klaus asks how often he will have to service his smartwatch.

In response, he is walked through a process of logins and docking that will have to take place 18 times per year.

The tagline of this film says that the IWC watch has "all updates included until 2499."

IWC is not the first watchmaker to take on smartwatches with a display of timelessness.

In 2017, Swiss watchmaker H. Moser & Cie debuted a timepiece with a strikingly familiar design that is seemingly a direct send-up of the Apple Watch.

The Swiss Alp Watch Zzzz is almost a direct copy of the Apple Watch with one key difference: it is entirely analog. Communications for the timepiece made the comparison almost explicit, suggesting that H. Moser was having some fun at the expense of the tech-obsessed while reinforcing the superiority of its high-end watches ([see story](#)).

Rather than rendering classic watches obsolete, technology-focused timepieces have instead opened consumers up to the idea of investing in what they wear on their wrists.

During a panel discussion hosted by the Madison Avenue Business Improvement District on June 11, coinciding with the retail thoroughfare's Watch Week, speakers talked about how smartwatches and mechanical watches coexist in consumers' wardrobes. While releases such as the Apple Watch may have hurt sales of fashion timepieces, they have actually been a boon to brands such as Rolex, getting consumers accustomed to wearing and relying on a watch ([see story](#)).

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